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ABSTRACT

This brief examines patterns of Internet access in schools. Highlights include: (1) Between fall 1994 and 1997, Internet access in public schools increased from 35 to 78 percent, but in fall 1997, 27 percent of instructional rooms had Internet access; (2) in fall 1995, public schools were more likely to have Internet access than private schools (50 versus 25 percent) and public schools had a higher percentage of instructional rooms with Internet access than private schools (8 versus 5 percent); (3) public schools with a high percentage of low income students (71 percent or more of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch) were less likely than schools with a low percentage of low-income students (less than 11 percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch) to have Internet access in fall 1997; (4) in fall 1997, public schools with a high minority enrollment (50 percent or more) had a lower rate of Internet access than public schools with a low minority enrollment (less than 6 percent); and public schools with a high minority enrollment had a smaller percentage of instructional rooms with Internet access than public schools with a low minority enrollment; and (5) in both public and private schools with Internet access, teachers were more likely than students to have access to e-mail, news groups, resource location services, and the World Wide Web. A table showing percentage of public schools and instructional rooms with Internet access, by selected school characteristics (fall 1994-97) and two charts indicating Internet access in public schools (1994-97) are also provided. (AEF)

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ED 426 694

INDICATOR OF THE MONTH

NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

Internet access in public and private schools

February 1999

The Internet, with its vast array of information, can broaden the learning resources available through schools by providing teachers and students with connections to remote libraries, schools, and government agencies. Information found on the Internet can broaden students' knowledge base, and having Internet access can prepare students for an increasingly technological workplace. Examining patterns of Internet access in schools may help determine how many students will be prepared to use this technology effectively in the future.

- Between fall 1994 and 1997, Internet access in public schools increased from 35 to 78 percent. However, in fall 1997, 27 percent of instructional rooms had Internet access.
- In fall 1995, public schools were more likely to have Internet access than private schools (50 versus 25 percent). Additionally, public schools had a higher percentage of instructional rooms with Internet access than private schools (8 versus 5 percent).
- Public schools with a high percentage of low income students (71 percent or more of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch) were less likely than schools with a low percentage of low-income students (less than 11 percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch) to have Internet access in fall 1997.
- In fall 1997, public schools with a high minority enrollment (50 percent or more) had a lower rate of Internet access than public schools with a low minority enrollment (less than 6 percent). Moreover, public schools with a high minority enrollment had a smaller percentage of instructional rooms with Internet access than public schools with a low minority enrollment.
- In both public and private schools with Internet access, teachers were more likely than students in these schools to have access to e-mail, news groups, resource location services, and the World Wide Web.

Percentage of public schools and instructional rooms with Internet access, by selected school characteristics: Fall 1994–97

School characteristics	Percentage of schools with Internet access				Percentage of instructional rooms with Internet access[1]			
	1994	1995	1996	1997	1994	1995	1996	1997
Total	**35**	**50**	**65**	**78**	**3**	**8**	**14**	**27**
Level of school[2]								
Elementary	30	46	61	75	3	8	13	24
Secondary	49	65	77	89	4	8	16	32
Percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch								
Less than 11	—	62	78	88	—	9	18	36
11–30	—	59	72	83	—	10	16	32
31–70	—	47	58	78	—	7	14	27
71 or more	—	31	53	63	—	3	7	14
Percentage of minority students enrolled								
Less than 6	—	52	65	84	—	9	18	37
6–20	—	58	72	87	—	10	18	35
21–49	—	54	65	73	—	9	12	22
50 or more	—	40	56	63	—	3	5	13

— Not available.

[1] Based on the total number of instructional rooms in regular public schools.

[2] Data for combined schools are not reported as a separate level of school because there are too few sample observations for reliable estimates. Data for combined schools are included in the totals.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, "Internet Access in Public Schools," Issue Brief and Issue Brief supplemental table 1, February 1998.

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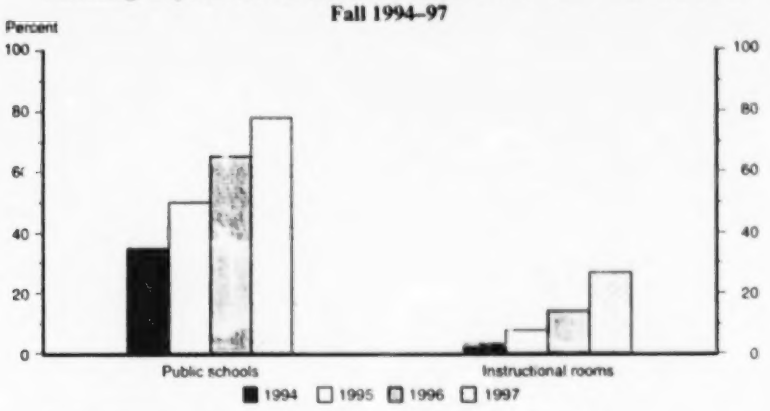
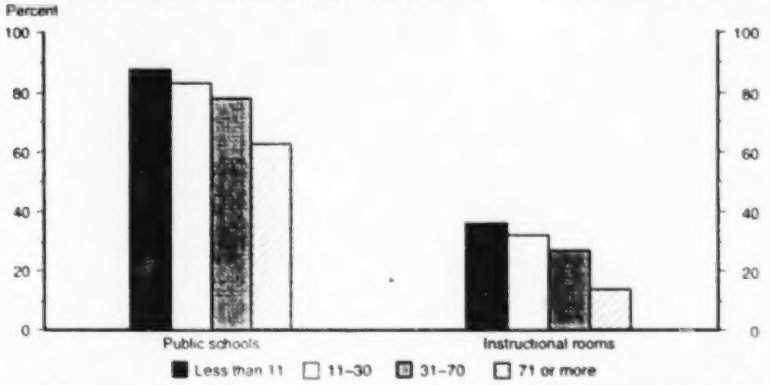
Internet access in public schools

Percentage of public schools and instructional rooms* with Internet access: Fall 1994–97



Percentage of public schools and instructional rooms* with Internet access, by percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch: Fall 1997



* Based on the total number of instructional rooms in regular public schools.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Advanced Telecommunications in U.S. Public Elementary and Secondary Schools, Fall 1996*, 1997 and "Internet Access in Public Schools," Issue Brief, February 1998.

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